U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL MATERIALS AGENCY www.cma.army.mil

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CMA PROGRESS AT A GLANCE

as of March 22, 2010:

— Anniston Chemical Activity, Ala.: Anniston Chemical Agent Disposal Facility's specially-trained employees have started using the Linear Projectile Mortar Disassembly to remove the explosives from the mustard-filled 4.2-inch mortars that Anniston Chemical Activity employees delivered to them. The building used to destroy the mortars is laid out to resemble an area of the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP) at Pueblo Chemical Depot, Colo. Reliability and maintenance data collected at Anniston will be used by their Pueblo counterparts to safely demilitarize the Colorado chemical munitions stockpile. (No chemical munitions are being moved to or from the Alabama site or the Colorado site.) Managers predict lessons learned in Anniston will be instrumental in helping the PCAPP team prepare for future safe disposal operations there.

— Deseret Chemical Depot, Utah: Tooele Chemical Agent Disposal Facility workers reached and surpassed nine million consecutive man-hours worked without a lost workday injury on March 5. They have safely destroyed more than 50 percent of the Deseret Chemical Depot stockpile of mustard agent-filled 4.2-inch mortars. Destruction of the 4.2-inch mortars is expected to be completed by Fall.

— Newport Chemical Depot, Ind.: Newport Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (NECDF) systems contractors notified the government that NECDF physical closure is complete. NECDF workers continue administrative closure activities, focusing on records archiving, property disposition and contracts closeout. CMA anticipates transfer of the Newport Chemical Depot property to Department of the Army Base Realignment and Closure Act on 18 Jul 10.

— Pine Bluff Chemical Activity, Ark.: Pine Bluff Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (PBCDF) personnel have worked more than three million consecutive man-hours without a lost workday injury. On March 1, PBCDF began ramping down the Metal Parts Furnace (MPF) and the Liquid Incinerator (LIC) for scheduled maintenance. During the one-month outage, the following activities will be conducted: re-bricking the LIC, inspection of the MPF and installation of the Heel Transfer System. PBCDF has safely destroyed more than 60 percent of the mustard-filled ton containers which is their final disposal campaign.

— Umatilla Chemical Depot, Ore.: Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility received approval from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality on its Agent Trial Burn Plan for the MPF and LIC. Approval allows the facility to run emission tests to demonstrate it can destroy the stockpile in accordance with its Resource Conservation and Recovery Act permit. In shakedown activities that began in June 2009, the facility has destroyed 229 ton containers filled with a total of 373,810 pounds of mustard agent.

International, U.S. Officials meet at Anniston for Treaty Update

Turkish Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, Ahmet Üzümcü, traveled to Alabama last month for a series of briefings and a tour of Anniston Chemical Activity (ANCA) and Anniston Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (ANCDF). The visit was to help him prepare for his next position as the Director General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)—the organization charged with overseeing the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The current OPCW Director General, Rogelio Pfirter, accompanied his successor during the U.S. trip. Pfirter steps down on July 24 and Üzümcü assumes his new role the following day.

Several groups briefed the visitors, including the U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency (CMA), the U.S. Army Element Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives (ACWA), ANCA and ANCDF.

As Pfirter prepares to step down from his post at OPCW, he said of the Anniston visit, "This lays a good foundation for the new Director General to have a better understanding of the U.S. program."

Üzümcü, whose diplomatic career began in 1976, has expertise in political-military affairs and disarmament and proliferation issues, primarily through positions with North Atlantic Treaty Organization. He said, "I know what an international position means. It is quite the challenge, especially … at those times of the implementation of the organization's concerns. Future tasks by [OPCW will] focus more on non-proliferation activities, inspections of chemical industrial sites and so on."

Looking back at his eight years as the OPCW Director General, Pfirter said, "I think hopefully we have today an organization that is clearly seen as very efficient. I believe that was not decidedly the case when I arrived in 2002. So I take some pride in having worked well with all my colleagues in making this, as I said, a unique international organization…"

CMA Director Conrad F. Whyne said, "My primary objective for the trip was to ensure that the incoming Director General for the OPCW, Ambassador Üzümcü, became fully aware and fully cognizant of all of our successes, especially here at Anniston and also all of our challenges for the future and of the U.S.' deep commitment to do everything we can to remain in compliance with the treaty."

Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Elimination of Chemical Weapons) Carmen J. Spencer said, "I am happy to see that the OPCW has been able to move forward significantly. It enjoys the respect and consideration of others. It is seen as an efficient organization."

Both Spencer and Whyne praised the Anniston team for all their hard work and dedication to the program.

Nationally, almost 72 percent of the U.S. stockpile of chemical munitions has been safely destroyed, with the stockpiles at Johnston Island, Aberdeen, Md., and Newport, Ind., eliminated. CMA stockpiles in Alabama, Arkansas, Oregon, and Utah are currently being reduced and new disposal facilities under ACWA are under construction in Kentucky and Colorado.

Ken Ankrom (far right), ANCDF plant manager, describes to visitors how chemical munitions are safely processed. The visitors are (left to right): Kevin J. Flamm, Program Manager, U.S. Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives; Dr. Arthur T. Hopkins, Deputy Assistant to the U.S. Secretary of Defense for Nuclear & Chemical & Biological Defense Programs; Tom Thompson, U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency; Gabriela Coman-Enescu, Verification Division, Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons; Richard Ekwall, OPCW Chief of Cabinet; and Dr. Robert Mikulak, Executive Director, U.S. National Authority for the Chemical Weapons Convention, Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation.

Simple Ways to Avoid Back Pain

Back pain – whether it's a dull ache or throbbing pain – can be bothersome to your lifestyle and pace at home and at work. It is one of the most common medical problems, *affecting 8 out of 10 people at some point in their lives*. The main factors causing back pain are exerting too much force, repetitive physical movements, awkward body postures (especially while lifting) and even mental pressure or stress, which can lead to muscle tension.

If there is no direct medical problem, back aches may be the result of a lack of exercise. If you are getting the proper amount of exercise, then think about your work station. Is your chair too high or too low? Do you have good posture? Do you have a high level of stress? Any of these situations could lead to back pain. Try to correct or eliminate the reasons why your back may be hurting, and remember that small changes can lead to a healthier lifestyle, and a healthy life includes a strong back.

A Digital Legacy – the Newport Chemical Depot

Leaving behind a legacy is a rite of passage when monumental events occur, whether it's achieved by a person, a community or a state. The Newport Chemical Depot (NECD) in Indiana will leave behind a legacy long after it closes thanks to the Wabash Valley Visions and Voices, a digital memory project based at the Indiana State University Cunningham Memorial Library.

The Visions and Voices project is dedicated to preserving the past, present and future. Since the library recently added the NECD archive, the public now has access to an easy and informative view of depot history, dating as far back as 1941. The 52 items on display range from photos to fact sheets to videos. While the history of the depot is rich, the project focused on the elimination of VX, since this was the only chemical agent stored there. At first glance, each item only has a subject, title and brief description, but when selected, more information populates the page.

NECD Commander Lt. Col. William Hibner said, "The Army has appreciated the contributions of the Newport team for nearly 70 years. It is our hope that this lasting collection can show the valuable efforts of the work force to the surrounding communities, the country and the world. Here at Newport we made history, and we made a difference."

Screen shot of Newport Chemical Depot History website

The depot safely stored 4 percent of the nation's original chemical agent stockpile— destroyed using neutralization technology. Workers at the Newport Chemical Agent Disposal Facility began destroying the stockpile May 5, 2005, and the last batch was completed on Aug. 8, 2008. Indiana is the third U.S. site to complete its mission by eliminating the stockpile that was stored there.

To view the project, visit:
http://visions.indstate.edu/visions/necd.html

Umatilla Employee Exposed to Small Amount of Mustard Agent

The Army is conducting an analysis to determine how a worker was exposed to a small amount of mustard agent while doing maintenance in the Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility's (UMCDF) main processing building March 17.

The employee's skin blister is healing well and no additional medical treatment is anticipated. The employee did not miss a scheduled day of work.

A root cause analysis of factors that led to the exposure is under way, with experts from the U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency headquarters at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Ga., on-site to assist.

"This is a reminder that mustard agent is an extremely hazardous substance," said Mike Strong, the U.S. Army Site Project Manager at UMCDF. "It's absolutely critical that we take care of our employees and take measures to prevent this from happening again."

Two other worker exposures have occurred in the program since the Army opened its first full-scale chemical demilitarization facility in 1990. A worker at Johnston Atoll developed a mustard blister in 1994, and a Tooele Chemical Agent Disposal Facility worker was exposed to a small amount of GB agent in 2002.

TOCDF Carbon Test Results Favorable

Recent testing of the mercury-contaminated carbon filters from the change out of the carbon in the Metal Parts Furnace (MPF) mercury filtration system revealed that the Tooele Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (TOCDF) can dispose of the used carbon at a local hazardous waste landfill.

The MPF Pollution Abatement System Filtration System (PFS) uses sulfur-impregnated carbon to capture mercury from the furnace exhaust gases.The filter banks, which house the sulfur impregnated carbon, are monitored for mercury throughout the PFS; a rise in mercury levels alerts TOCDF officials when the carbon needs to be replaced. TOCDF officials utilized downtime during a scheduled MPF maintenance outage to replace the first two beds of carbon. This allowed them to determine the mercury contamination levels in the carbon and find the most appropriate disposal options for the used carbon.

The mercury-contaminated carbon was sent to a laboratory in Salt Lake City, where they performed a required U.S. Environmental Protection Agency test called the Toxicity Characteristic Leaching Procedure (TCLP), which simulates landfill conditions to see if the mercury will leach from the carbon into the soil and possibly into groundwater, or if it will remain attached to the carbon.

The results of the TCLP test came back with good news. URS Hazardous Waste Manager Sean McClatchey further explained the results, saying, "The mercury doesn't just stick to the carbon, it actually locks itself into the sulfur, so as long as there is sulfur available, it will continue to capture the mercury."

These results allow TOCDF officials to begin shipping the mercury-contaminated carbon to the Clean Harbors' Grassy Mountain hazardous waste landfill for disposal.

"We are very pleased with the final results because we know that we can dispose of the used carbon now instead of setting it aside in storage until we were able to determine a sufficient disposal option on site," McClatchey said.

CMA News is produced by the U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency Public Affairs Office.
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